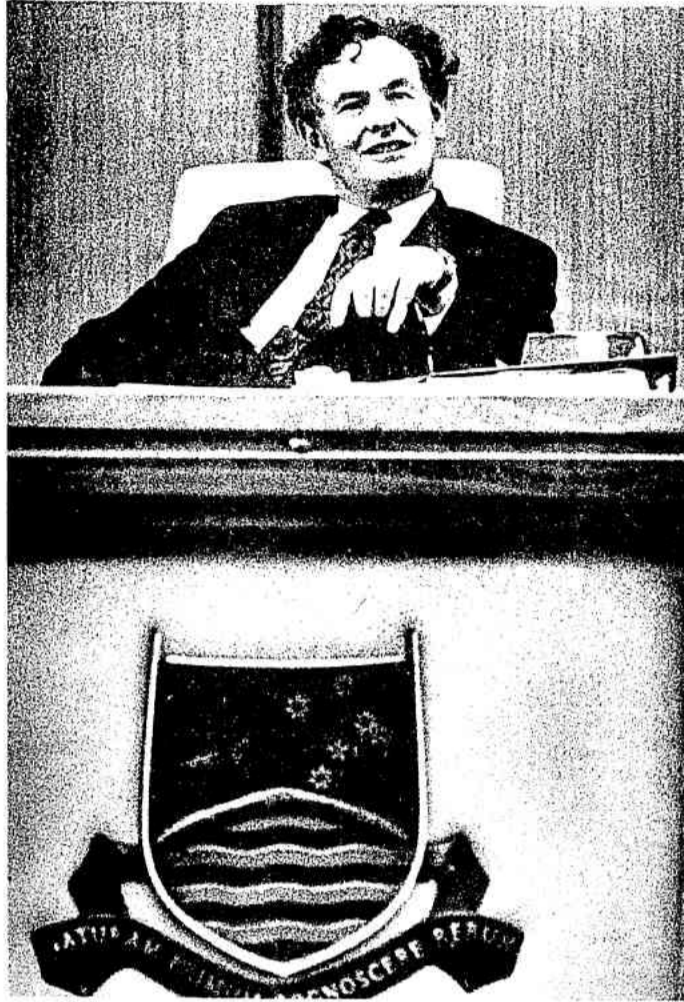


**APPROVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY**

WORON! Vol. 26 No. 8
Newspaper of the ANU
Students



V.C. Williams thinks that the occupation is all a joke.



Julius Roe, chairman of the S.A. education Committee disagrees.



Michael Dunn points the "bone" at Chuckles.

YOU THINK THE COVER'S BAD, READ ON...



Who are you to think that you can change the world?



POLITICS OF SISTERHOOD

On Friday morning in the Mills room of the Chancery the University Council, in its usual forthright and courageous manner, deigned to "invite" the Board of the School of General Studies to "discuss" the demands which the student body put before them. Unlike the VC on Thursday afternoon they did not even bother to discuss the issue of a women's studies course. Williams, however, made one of those comments designed to turn any feminist into a gibbering homicidal maniac. Asked if he supported the idea of such a course, he answered that naturally he did, but that we were oversimplifying the matter. He had seen courses instituted for a special study of black issues and Sanskrit (!!!) which ran into a great many difficulties — presumably because they concerned themselves too narrowly with the issues of minorities and did not consider wider societal issues! EEEEEEEK!! I'm still gibbering! When in the name of all shit, are they going to realise that WOMEN ARE NOT A MINORITY GROUP?

The motion concerning women's studies which the meeting of students carried unanimously called for "the establishment of a women's studies course, its content to be decided by the women of this university". That being accepted the women of this university must now decide a definite programme of what the content is to be. The ideas I am going to put forward in this article are my own and are only suggestions. Hopefully there will be many more suggestions before we present our case, to whatever god-forsaken subcommittee of committee of special committee etc ad nauseam, will finally realise that we are SERIOUS.

Firstly, I will once again (and I hope finally) state exactly why it is necessary to have such a course. The purpose of this university, as delicately explained to us by an ad hoc committee of council, is to educate us to take our places in this society. Since the society in question is run by men and for the benefit of men obviously there would be little point in educating women to be anything but "good companions", "good mothers" and "the powers behind the thrones". Therefore, even though we are graciously allowed to attend this hallowed institution of higher learning we are taught only patriarchal history, literature, economics psychology etc. etc. It is our professed intention not to accept this society and it is our demand to be educated to build a better one. We therefore demand to be allowed to study the role of women in past and present societies, in order that we may fully understand the origin and nature of our oppression. For until we fully understand these things we cannot properly fight them. And fight them we must!

We are in the fortunate position of not being the first University to establish a



women's studies course so we do have the example and experience of others to draw on. To my knowledge there are three specific units involving the study of women at Sydney University:

Women's politics (of sexual politics) offered by the Government Department. The philosophical aspects of feminist thought offered by the philosophy department.

And women in the political economy — a department in itself jointly administered by the Economic and Government departments.

At Flinders University there is a full course of Women's Studies available. We hope to shortly have several copies of their handbook on the course available for consideration. I have neither the space nor the energy to recount what is offered at Flinders so I'll just say that they offer everything.

So to the ANU. Suffice it for the present to say that it offers nothing. I suggest that our best course of action is to push for a department of women's

studies, I don't give a shit who administers it so long as its content and means of assessment are determined by the women taking the course and the women giving the course. Which bring us to the question of whether or not we will accept men tutors or lecturers. I would say most certainly not! The concept of any man, however sympathetic, lecturing a group of women on the nature of their oppression is one I find totally repulsive. Apart from personal feelings of revulsion I also feel that such a situation merely serves to enforce the patriarchal image of man as the teacher, guide and leader of woman. So, apart from doing some serious homework on exactly what we want in the course, we are going to have to do some heavy canvassing of the 47 (out of 395) women members of the academic staff to discover which of them have the time and the inclination to do the teaching.

It's getting very late and I've just realised that I have used two terms in the preceding paragraph which I think we should leave out of a women's studies

course altogether — "lecture" and "teach". I would hope that it would be more a question of a "learning exchange", in the sense that all women have something to teach and something to learn from such a course. Nor do I wish to suggest that men should be excluded from being students of such a course, for I do not believe that separatism will achieve the ultimate aim of a society in which men and women can live together in a society which is neither oppressed or oppressing. It simply is a fact that the problems of the oppressed are different from those of the oppressor and no member of the oppressing group is capable of teaching the oppressed about the means of overcoming their oppression.

The struggle for a Women's Course at this university is bound up not just with the drive for a recognition of women's place in history and society but also with the campaign for democratic control of the University. The leading role played by women in the occupation and the demands for course re-appraisal indicate the depth of the relationship between the Women's Struggle and other progressive demands.

The immediate task of self-conscious women at the ANU is to mobilize their fellow students around the Educator/Democracy/Woman's Studies demands.

The achievement of these aims is of fundamental importance. Its suddenly got even later so I will conclude this diatribe with one more eek! quote and then give the last say to one of our sisters in the struggle to put some heart into us all.

The first from that delightful authority on how women should bring up their children, and incidentally, my current pick for male chauvinistic pig of the century — Dr Benjamin Spock:

"I think women are physically designed in a special way in their very muscles and bones"

"Men are the fighters, the builders, the trap makers, the ones who think mechanically and abstractly. Women have stayed realistic, personal, more conservative"

"Women welcome the fact that men stay more analytic and cool"

The trick with these ones is to substitute blacks every time he says women and whites every time he says men and see what you come up with — my thanks to Ruthann Miller for the idea.

But courage sisters the last word belongs to Eva Chertov:

"Feminist writing is one of gut conviction that we shall wait no more, that we are off our backs, and that in the tradition of our beautifully strong foremothers — Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Rosa Luxemburg — in their century of struggle, we shall win!

Liz O'Brien.



ETCETERAS

The Economics Major — A Statementaire?

The Economics Faculty has finally responded to criticism that the major is badly structured. Students in Ecos I, II, III were invited to fill in a 'questionnaire' on the economics major.

It is hard to escape the feeling that the questionnaire was designed merely to justify the existing course structure. For example the first question asks "the arrangement of material in the Economics major is based on the view that the first three semesters (i.e. Ecos I and the first half of Ecos II) must be devoted to the main areas of economic theory: macro-economics, microeconomics, trade. Do you agree with this view?"

This question assumes we know the main areas of economic theory are actually macro-economics, micro-economics and trade, and then asks whether we should study these main areas first, and in question 2 it asks in what 'weight' we should study these main areas. By implying the answer is either yes or no the questioners cleverly escape attack on whether these areas of economic thought are in fact the main areas. Joan Robinson of Cambridge University UK doesn't think so. She thinks the course structure ought to be: 1) history of economic theory 2) economics of the developed and under-developed countries, 3) statistical methods. However as one student said "How would we know, we have never had an alternative".

In question 3 we at last have a concession, social economics has been added to the list of alternatives. (A breakthrough, after all a student member of FEC did not even believe it existed a few weeks ago). However the semester course implied in question 3, runs dead against what students fought for last year — the proliferation of assessment, and pavlovian responses that semesters necessarily create. After this 'questionnaire' one can only be extremely sceptical about what the faculty thinks students should have learnt in a) Industry economics b) foreign trade c) macroeconomics d) development economics or e) social economics — one suspects that all these essentially interesting topics a) to e) will continue to define in the faculty's own imitatively narrow style.

This 'questionnaire' was a farce — the status quo, obviously inadequate, is the premise from which all the questions follow. No suggestion is made that class sizes should be reduced, that the social viewpoint be broadened, that the course become more flexible i.e. less concentration on anti-educational assessment procedures like exams and more concentration on allowing students to follow their own areas of interest. Why should everyone have to do the same essay, surely 600 people's interests are not the same? Why does every important area of economic interest have to be categorised, formalised and put into a course to be assessed by an exam? The concentration on single monolithic course structures is very negative. The economics course could be split up into various areas of interest with tutorials, seminars and lecture within the Economics major exploring equally valid and different areas of interest. Assessment, if that is really necessary, could be by essays, tutorial and seminars, assignments and perhaps even some exams provided the faculty learns how to set non-value loaded questions. In this way we avoid i) large class sizes, ii) alienation of students because of diversity of interests within the course, iii) impersonal, restrictive assessment procedures.

I suggest that the faculty throw away the 'results' of this survey and start a new survey not based on the status quo, but presenting an alternative to the present course structure. Perhaps they could look at the philosophy course here



at ANU for a working example of a flexible course. It is silly to argue that the status-quo is wonderful when there is a 50% wastage rate in Ecos I and widespread if amorphous dissent in Ecos II and III.

S.a. policy

The general policy of the ANU Students' Association is for more choice and control for students within the University. This meets the demands of active students and is based on the belief that the inactivity of many students and their excessive concern with assessment procedure perpetuates itself within the current structures. If more real choice is allowed, then that will lead to the use of more choice and a more active and educationally responsible University.

Courses

The Students' Association believes in joint staff-student control, on an equal basis of representation, in the determination of course content.*

- More vigorous implementation of teacher and course evaluation with University assistance.
- Action by students in the particular area concerned. Liaison Committees and Faculties may be of use. This would be supported by the Students' Association the advice of general gatherings of such student representatives.*

- Student influence on staff appointments in order to satisfy demands for changed courses.

The objectives of the course are as much a part of its content as the material contained in it.*

Assessment

There is a clear relationship between course content and assessment in that those courses which have the most rigid form of assessment, particularly with emphasis on the 3 hour exam, have the least flexibility in course content.* Student choice of assessment is limited by two extreme proposals:-

- unlimited choice by each student
- choices as provided by each teacher

Clearly either of these two extremes is not practical since the student under (a) could elect for no assessment and the teacher under (b) may elect for no choice. There is at the moment, in view of the social pressure and its effect on student demands, a need for some form of assessment. However this does not mean that everyone must be assessed in the same way. The following proposals are suggested:-

- In any course (i) the focus of assessment ought to be appropriate to the objectives of the course and (ii) that no single item of assessment bearing any significant portion of the unit's marks be compulsory.
- Students in a unit approve in general the range and nature of choices offered and the relative weights they are to have.
- To facilitate meaningful choice and

to lessen the emphasis on assessment only "pass", "fail", and "permitted to proceed with honours" on the first three or four years in Law and Accounting, in both pass and honours courses.

- Workloads committees should be strengthened and encouraged on faculties. There should be a common flexible policy on extensions and a rationalization of deadlines. Where one assignment is due within one week of another, one week's extension ought to be granted, if two are due, two weeks' extension, and so on.

Degree Structures

Students should be enabled to take either a specialized or a diversified degree course, but in any case the system of pre- and co-requisites should be minimal.

* note all changes are proposed amendments for Wednesday 24th April, at 8 pm.

verse

Jeremy Robson (ed.) *Poetry Dimension I* Abacus, February 1974, pp. 203, \$2.30

In this first of a new series Robson intends to present "a living record" of Britain's Poetry Year. It includes thirty-seven poets and fifty-eight poems. Yet what sets it apart from the *Australian Poetry* style of anthology is the sixteen pieces of criticism and general articles by poets included. It represents most of the familiar British poets (Auden, MacBeth, Larkin...) and numerous lesser and newer names.

It is good to see criticism and articles in the same book as the poems. In this way the reader is exposed to the poetry and the critical climate into which it is released. David Lodge's incisive interpretation of Ted Hughes's *Crow* ("Crow and the Cartoons") strikes me as being one of the finest pieces of criticism to emerge out of the woolly verbiage of post-Eliot criticism.

Robson's choice of poems from his given sources is conservative but essentially sane. Some of the younger poets are beginning to show definite signs of maturity. Seamus Heaney has restrained the domestic violence of his earlier works to accommodate a more assured poetic skill where language is tempered by experience. In "Dedicatory Poem" he says:

Is there a life before death? That's chalked up
on a wall downtown. Competence
with pain,
coherent miseries, a bite and sup,
we hug our little destiny again.

Too many anthologists cling to the warped notion that for a poem to be "good" it must not only be serious but also solemn. Robson has the good sense to include poems such as Peter Porter's "Sex and the Over Forties" where we find lines such as:

Trying it with noises and in strange
positions,
trying it with the young themselves,
trying to keep it up with the Joneses!

Robson is clearly afraid of over-representation in the case of some poets. Although Ted Hughes' work is mentioned in criticism he has no poetry included, — the same is true of Ian Hamilton. Also, it is strange to discover Ezra Pound classified as British and hence included by no mention of Thom Gunn. However, now that Robson has overcome the initial barrier of a new style of annual anthology the inherent difficulties should be easily resolved.

Kevin Hart

YUK! THIS IS AN
EDUCATIONAL
DISASTER AREA



There is no perfect competition of interests within the Economics Faculty. It is 'controlled' by an oligopoly of 'American-type' mathematicians. The lecturers seem to have little historical perspective and no philosophical training. They appear to have only limited knowledge of underdevelopment and the 3rd world and no knowledge at all about Russia or China. The increasing emphasis on mathematics, while worthwhile within a certain context, is making the students more and more passive. Because they have not yet grasped all the tools they feel both too incompetent and frightened to question the theory. The course structure discourages an interdisciplinary approach.

Why is the choice set of units so limited? Why are there no semesters on anything interesting — like Asia or Inflation or Marx? What happened to underdevelopment or Rent Control? Why isn't there an undergrad. unit in Systems thinking/policy direction? Why won't anyone talk about the implications of ZPG or the possibility or otherwise of energy crisis. Has nobody heard of the Welfare State or the practice of Social Democracy?

When was the division into macro/micro/trade theory last examined? According to Joan Robinson, the course structure should be:

1. history of economic theory
2. economics of the developed and also the underdeveloped (neo-colonial) countries,
3. statistical methods.

In addition to criticism of the Economics Faculty, there have been considerable objections to the study of Economics itself.

1. Objections from the Left.

(a) Many students who study Economics are ashamed of that very fact. The study is continually criticised as an apology for the capitalist system. Whether one accepts a Marxist point of view or not, one can certainly admit that Economics, as taught at the ANU is politically irrelevant. "Paradoxically, one way in which this economic theory is relevant (politically) lies precisely in this apparent irrelevance. If economic theory fails to deal with those social political questions which fall within its sphere of interest, then in so far as the questions are ignored, the status quo remains unaffected". Economics continues its attempt to be 'positive' rather than 'normative'. Meanwhile its teachers seem unaware of the philosophical (Marxist) objections to 'positivism' itself. Students however are becoming increasingly aware of such objections and for that reason alone, the Economics faculty should meet rather than ignore them. (It could begin by finding a definition of 'positivism').

England held rigidly to mercantilism in both theory and practice during the period when she held no strong advantage over her competitors. But under reverse conditions, when England assumed the dominant place in an expanding capitalist world, she stood only to gain from the unrestricted play of market forces. Theory then turned to an admirable a priori justification of free trade: the theory of comparative advantage. Free trade in fact worked to England's advantage, precisely because the assumptions of the model were not fulfilled".

(d) Even modern econometric and statistical techniques are not neutral, because the use of one set will exclude the use of others. The New Left objects to the present techniques Linear Programming works within the assumption of linearities and independence of consumer and producer units. Game Theory presupposes assumptions of an individualistic non-structural Benthamite world. Regression analysis stipulates as an essential condition the absence of autocorrelation — by definition, ruling out the possibility of a dialectic process of internal conflict. The notion that an economist can provide the means to give political ends involves a circularity because one decision must predetermine future choice. In most economic

(b) Neoclassical economics fails to allow for the basic feedback principle of cybernetics. It is commonly understood that: family/social conditioning — particular education and suitable employment in the capitalist system.

But it is also frequently forgotten that a capitalist system implies particular family and social institutions. This positive feedback perpetuates the system. Neoclassical economics assumes individual freedom and consumer 'sovereignty' but fails to comprehend the limitations of such concepts within the system defined above.

(c) The 'Ricardian vice' of neoclassical economics is often criticised. This is "the habit of applying results of a theory, which is excellent, can never be refuted and lacks nothing but sense, to the solution of practical problems." Solutions are solutions, it is claimed, precisely by virtue of their socio-political acceptability.

"Perhaps the best example of the interconnection of economic theory and economic conditions is the debate between mercantilism and free trade. Joan Robinson's essay shows the adaption of one or other theory was independent of the inherent correctness of either, but was determined by economic conditions.

theory, time is the sum of comparative static positions but time is not neutral, as the neo-classicist, with his reversible marginal curves, would have us believe. Shifts from short to long run remain indeterminate. The world is assumed by economists to be such that its dynamic is provided by a tendency to move into equilibrium, disturbed by occasional alienations. i.e. the world is naturally in harmony.

(e) Economic History uses Rostrian concepts of industrial growth but fails to explain the transitions between his periods. Similarly the theory of underdevelopment (what little there may be at ANU), fails from the outset because it considers each country in isolation. Neoclassical attempts to study Socialism also fail from the beginning. They see the difference between the capitalist and communist economy as one between anarchy and technocratic planning. But planning cannot be instituted from the top. It is something which grows from worker's control at a micro level.

It is logically possible to have 2 inconsistent theories, both equally satisfactory at explaining the data. Can the method in economics offer any way other than intuition of distinguishing them? If not, both theories should be taught?

2. Objections from the Neo-Keynesians. Why are students told nothing of the controversy between Cambridge, England and Massachusetts. What has happened to growth theory?

3. Objections from an individual. When will something be done about the Phillips Curve? This curve suggests that there is a trade-off between inflation and unemployment but it now appears that this is not always so. Inflation seems to have its favourable effect on unemployment only so long as it is not anticipated. The curve shifts to the right as people expect price increases and turns horizontally as wage rises become institutional phenomena independent of employment levels. When will students be told such things?

Obviously the staff isn't particularly interested in teaching. Hopefully it will answer some of the above objections. Despite all the criticism, Eco. I is pretty good value, simply because the Prof. goes off on occasional socio-political tangents. By the end of 2nd year students begin to wonder what the hell they have let themselves in for. By 4th year they realise that economics is a matter of highly abstract but trivial mathematical models and that to see it otherwise is to opt out. Economics here is just bloody boring. What has happened to the spirit of Political Economy?